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gary, nor his many crafty treaties, can altogether stifle. Not in any divine mission to stand forth as the champion of Christianity, but in the consciousness that there is yet something to be fulfilled, lie the germs of the present crisis. Whether it is better that the peace of the world should be broken, than that another Romanoff should go down to his tomb without the barbaric title of Great, is a question for the modern Attila to settle with HIM from whom, in the simple faith of the people he governs, his authority and his mission are derived.

Happily, the destinies of European nations do not depend upon any balance of motives or duties within the breast of the Northern chief. There are other races in the Old World not disposed to admit the premises or the prerogatives of Pan-slavism. There are countries not so great as Russia, yet greater in everything that constitutes a state, not prepared to be blotted out by a ukase. The Northern empire still wishes to seem rather than to be, and her power, so formidable in defence and for internal coercion, will avail but little against nations skilled in the arts and fertile in the appliances of war. Let only France and England forget the contests of the past in the common danger that hovers round the future, let Austria disdain to hold the heritage of the Cæsars at the hands of the Czar, and there need be little fear that the Cossack shall ever again cross the Rhine, or that the double-headed eagle shall guard exclusively the waters of the Golden Horn.

ART. X. — CRITICAL NOTICES.

1. *Life of BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON, Historical Painter, from his Autobiography and Journals.* BY TOM TAYLOR. London. 3 vols. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1853. 2 vols.

THIS very attractive book has been, and will be, widely read. It is sad, it is strange, and yet it is sparkling with amusing anecdote, and contains, in its chaotic collection of the memoranda of forty years, a great deal of learning and of good sense. It will have a sort of perma-

ment value from its well-told stories of the distinguished Englishmen of the first half of this century, of whom Haydon knew a great many. But this value is such, that, as has been said of the book, with some wit, it is like one of Haydon's own pictures, in which the central figure is always least interesting and worst done.

So unaccountable, so incoherent, is the life of the artist, as in these pages he tells it himself, that an English reviewer solves its intricacies as a coroner's jury solves intricate questions of motive, by saying that they are insolvable; or in so many words, that Haydon was always mad,—insane. This is only a short way of saying that one cannot make him out, and that there were about him eccentricities deeply seated and of fatal issue. But a madman hardly carries on a contest for forty years with the Royal Academy,—often, during that time, receiving for his paintings high praise and large remuneration, and sometimes, by a series of lectures or by a distinguished picture, winning the public attention of England,—unless his madness be of a very mild type. If he had possessed less ability, such madness would have escaped observation. To call such a man insane his life through, is simply to say that you cannot find the key to the conflicting traits of his character.

To us in America, who quite fortunately have never seen but one of his historical paintings, and that the best, the "Christ entering Jerusalem," his own account of himself is almost the only criterion for a judgment of his artistic powers. We do not hesitate to say, then, that Haydon teaches us in the book itself, that, with very respectable, not remarkable, working talent in design, he had not a spark of the genius, the creative faculty, which gives new and beautiful conceptions to a great artist. His descriptions of a "grand idea" at which he "dashes like a tiger," or of an "exquisite conception" which comes to him like an inspiration, are invariably trite and commonplace to the last degree. There is not in the whole book one description of a picture which suggests a new idea or emotion, though there are many which awaken in the reader a curiosity to see the painting, that he may know how certain difficulties were conquered, or whether certain effects were as fine as Haydon thought them.

Now, as has been well said, the efforts of talent to do the work of genius always savor of the ludicrous. Haydon's attempts to supply the want of original conception, even by brilliant talent in management and execution, are ludicrous in his descriptions, when they are not sad. We do not doubt that they are as much so on the canvas. There is nothing surprising or unusual in this, though it is not often that a painter can continue such efforts for forty years. In other walks of art, such folly is very frequent. Ninety-nine hundredths of the

verse which gets written is written by people who have a talent for rhyme, for rhythm, for the observation of nature, for that sort of punning which seizes resemblances between physical nature and spiritual processes, who can therefore manage poetical figures and language cleverly, but who all the time have no genius, no original power, no new conceptions to give to the world, and are therefore no poets. With similar endowments and deficiencies in the realm of painting, you have Haydon. He could draw, he could read, he could detect salient points in history, he knew the anatomy of the human body, he had theories of composition as intelligible as anybody's are; but he had nothing, after all, which these gifts should express on his canvas, beyond what every one who came into his painting-room could express with his tongue to him.

The "Christ entering Jerusalem," his most successful picture, is now in Philadelphia, in the Franklin Academy. It appears at the annual exhibition there, a sad but curious illustration of the power of genius, and the worthlessness, for an artist's fame, of mere ability in execution. For it happens that the ass on which the Saviour rides is inimitably fine. When the picture was painted, Sir Edwin Landseer was a pupil of Haydon's; and "they say" that the young man was permitted to paint in this animal. There it remains, with all the marks of that distinguished genius which has raised the pupil to fame in his studies of the brute creation. The eye rests at once upon — the ass. Vainly has the painter tried to throw the animal back, — the ass will not retire. He all but speaks, — and surely no other figure of them all does. The gigantic worshippers in the foreground spread clothes nearly black before the Saviour, hoping apparently that the dark color may render the forth-putting beast less prominent; but he will come forward in spite of them. And we have fancied, without knowing any thing of the counsels of the Franklin Academy, that to the ass the picture owes the fixed place which it has upon their walls. As to the rest, the color does not seem to have stood well, — it must have been poor at best. As regards the figure of Christ, — meant to be the leading figure, which, as we have said, it is not, — it is impossible to account for Mrs. Siddons's critical eulogium upon it.

We cannot leave the book without noticing another reason for his failure, which will seem slight to those who have not read it, — but to them only. Haydon's journals — those twenty-six folio volumes full of his own conceit, of puffs when he was puffed, sedulously copied, in short, of incense for self-worship — had no doubt much to do with his ruin. It is clear that he read them a great deal. They nursed in him the notion that he had the power they said he had. He looked on his

forgotten entries of forty years gone by, as he would have looked on a criticism from a distant country, or on some magical prophecy of future fame. However hard the lesson which the world was teaching him as to his hasty works, or his works without meaning, these beloved journals repeated always, in their oracles, false predictions of his fame and triumph. This is no place to enter on the morals of journal-keeping, but there is a strong temptation to read a lesson from the injury wrought by it on a man of Haydon's temper.

With great capacity of enjoyment, he enjoyed a great deal in life. He read more than most men. He was happy in his family, and sedulously careful for his children. His temperament was religious, while he had but little religious principle,—a very frequent mixture in character, always to be regretted, but too common to excite surprise. The world certainly did for him vastly more than it had any valid reason for doing; and he as constantly abused it because it did not do much more. Still he carries with him to the last the sympathy, even the regard, of his reader, who is always hoping for him, and shudders as he draws near the story of his well-known fate.

Mr. Tom Taylor, who has condensed the autobiography and journals into two volumes, which would bear more condensation still, was once Professor of English Literature in the University of London. He is the author of a comedy brought out within a few months on the London stage. His work in these volumes is very kindly, and, in general, very well done.

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2. *Zohrah, or a Midsummer Day's Dream, and Other Poems.* By WILLIAM THOMAS THORNTON, Author of an Essay on "Over-Population," "A Plea for Peasant Proprietors," etc. London: Longmans. 16mo. pp. 149.

THE poems in this little volume are characterized by a more easy and vigorous flow of versification, and a more condensed expression of thought and feeling, than are often found in the metrical compositions of those who rhyme only for their own amusement, and do not give their days and nights to song. If they do not show a wide range of fancy, they have at least a solid foundation in truth; for they are built chiefly upon circumstances and speculations in which the writer has evidently more than a temporary interest,—upon themes which come home very nearly to his bosom, or have exercised his thoughts in many